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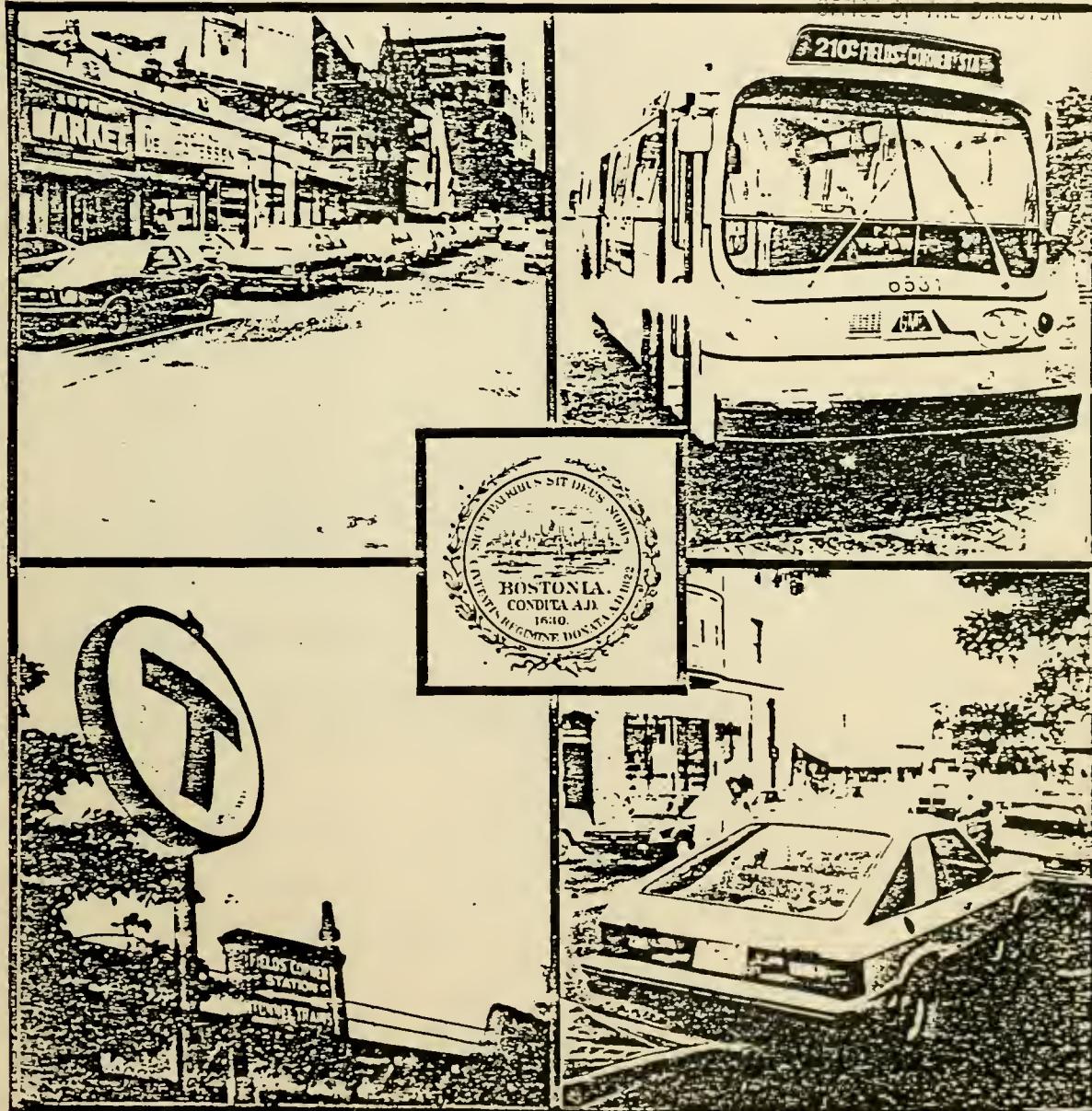
Parking Study

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Raymond L. Flynn, Mayor, City of Boston  
Lisa G. Chapnick, Commissioner, Traffic and Parking

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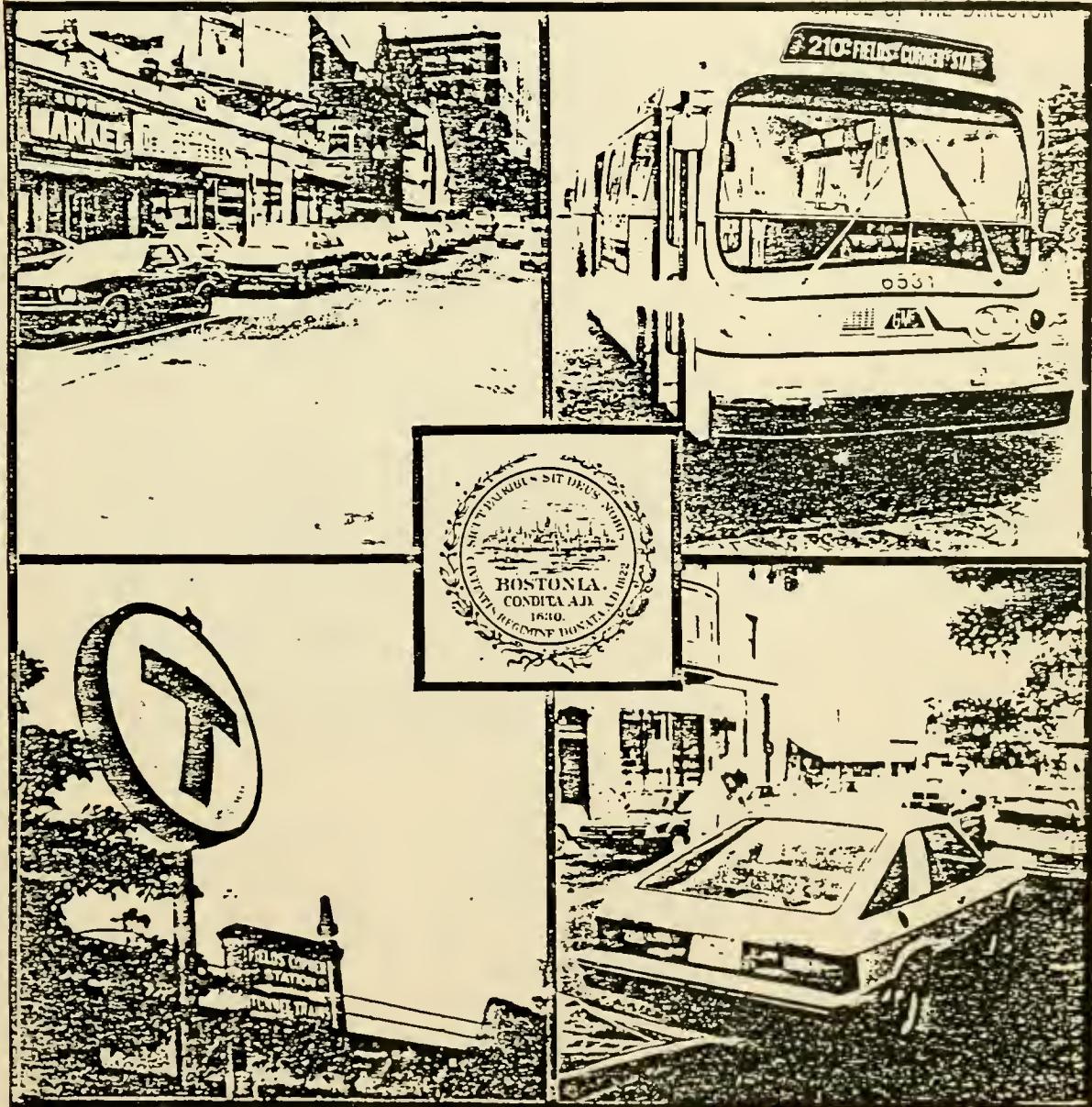
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## I. Introduction/Overview:

On December 10, 1984 the Traffic & Parking Department received a written request from J. Edward Roache, Commissioner of the Real Property Department, to perform a study of parking conditions in Fields Corner. The request focused on a desire to examine parking problems in the business district along Dorchester Avenue and Adams Street. The Traffic & Parking Department agreed to undertake the survey and performed field observations on March 14, 1985.

In the study, parking elements available in Fields Corner were distinguished as follows:

1. on-street parking, and
2. off-street parking.

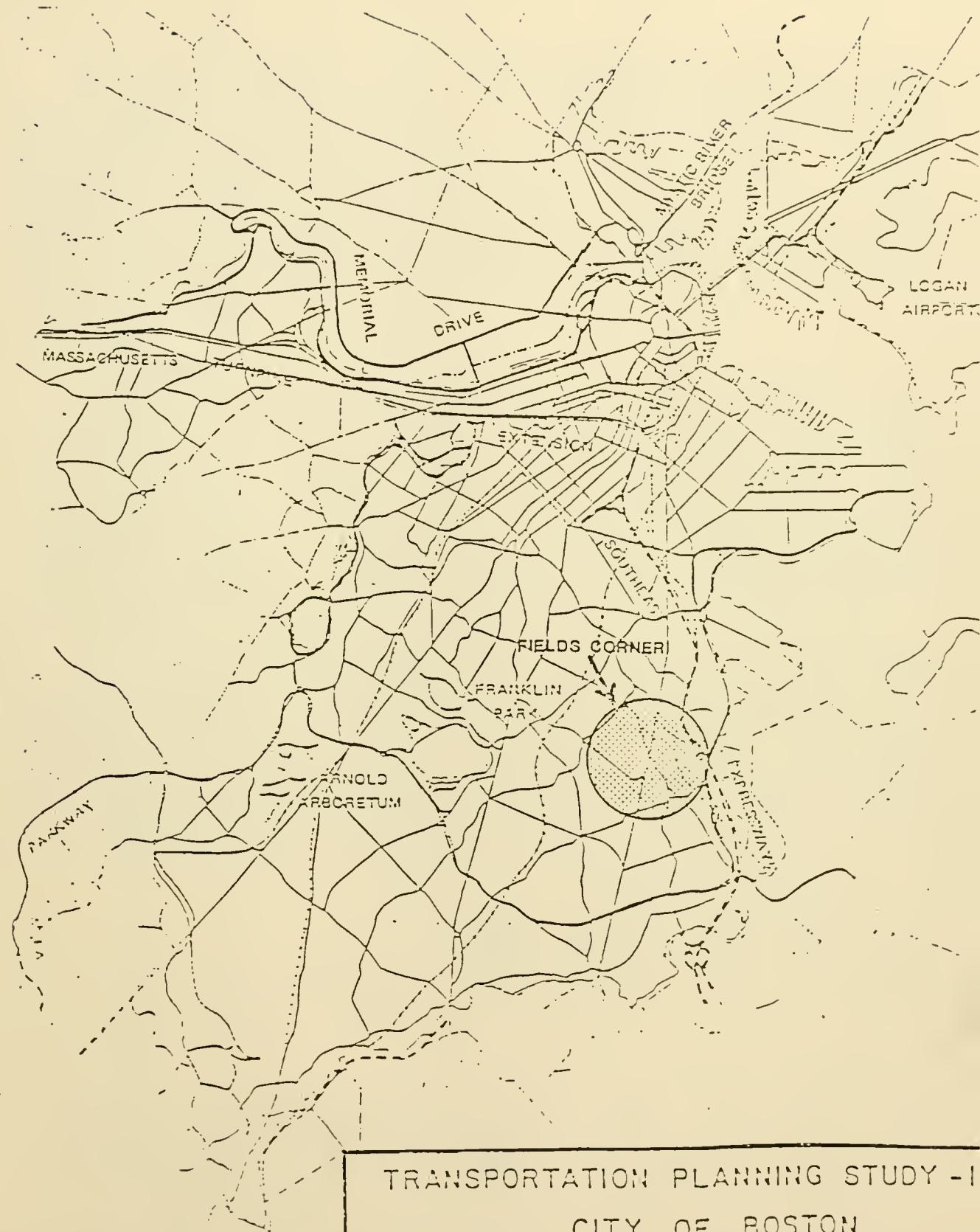
Parking supply was inventoried for both uses and parking demand was analyzed in this context. Based on this analysis, a series of recommendations were made, including potential locations for off-street surface and structural lots.

The boundaries of the Study Area, the existing land uses and transportation elements within these boundaries are discussed in the remainder of this section. In Section II, on-street parking demand is analyzed, while off-street parking opportunities are examined in Section III. An analysis of alternatives is made in Section IV. Finally, Section V contains recommendations for addressing observed problems and improving the operation of curb-side supply.

### I. 1 Study Area.

Fields Corner is located in the Southwest part of Boston (Figure 1), in the larger neighborhood of Dorchester. The exact boundaries of Fields Corner are difficult to define, although they are commonly perceived to be the general area surrounding the MBTA station on Dorchester Avenue between Park Street and Adams Street.





TRANSPORTATION PLANNING STUDY - I

CITY OF BOSTON  
TRAFFIC & PARKING DEPARTMENT

FIELDS CORNER

LOCATION



For the purposes of this study, a Field Corner Study Area was defined. Originally, a Study Corridor was designated as the corridor along Dorchester Ave. from Greenwich Street to Gibson Street including a section of Adams Street from Arcadia Street to Leonard Street (Figure 2). While these streets adequately addressed the needs of the on-street parking analysis, it was necessary to cover a larger area to obtain data relative to off-street parking facilities. The study area was expanded, therefore, to include a corridor approximately 500 feet on each side of Dorchester Avenue from Gibson Street to Elliot Street.

## I. 2 Background

Fields Corner has historically been a hub of activity. It is located at the crossroads of a major connector to downtown, Dorchester Ave., and a number of smaller, local connectors (e.g., Adams St., Park St., Geneva Ave., Neponset Ave.). These roadways first provided access for farmers to reach the marketplace that was located in Fields Corner during the nineteenth century. As the twentieth century opened, and the street car suburbs developed, trolley tracks began to replace the ruts of farmers wagons; Fields Corner soon became a major transfer point in Boston's sprawling streetcar network.

The role of Fields Corner as a transportation focal point continued with the extension of the Red Line in 1927. As the trolley system was dismantled during the post-World War II era, buses provided replacement service, with access between the surrounding communities and the transit station. Presently there are six bus lines operating out of Fields Corner (Figure 3). Approximate frequencies in minutes of transit and bus service in and out of Fields Corner are:

		<u>Freq. In Minutes</u>			
	<u>Rush Hour</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Sun.</u>
Red Line (Alwife - Ashmont)	6	10	13	10	16
<u>Bus Route</u>					
15 Dudley via Uphams			40	40*	60
17 Fields Cnr.-Andrew St.	15/12	45		22	
17A Fields Cnr.-Dudley Sta.			40		60
18 Ashmont-Andrew Sta.	60				
19 Fields Cnr.- Dudley via Geneva	20				
20 Fields Cnr.-Nep & Adams	15	30	30	30	60
210F Quincy Ctr.-Fields Cnr.	30			—	

\* PM only



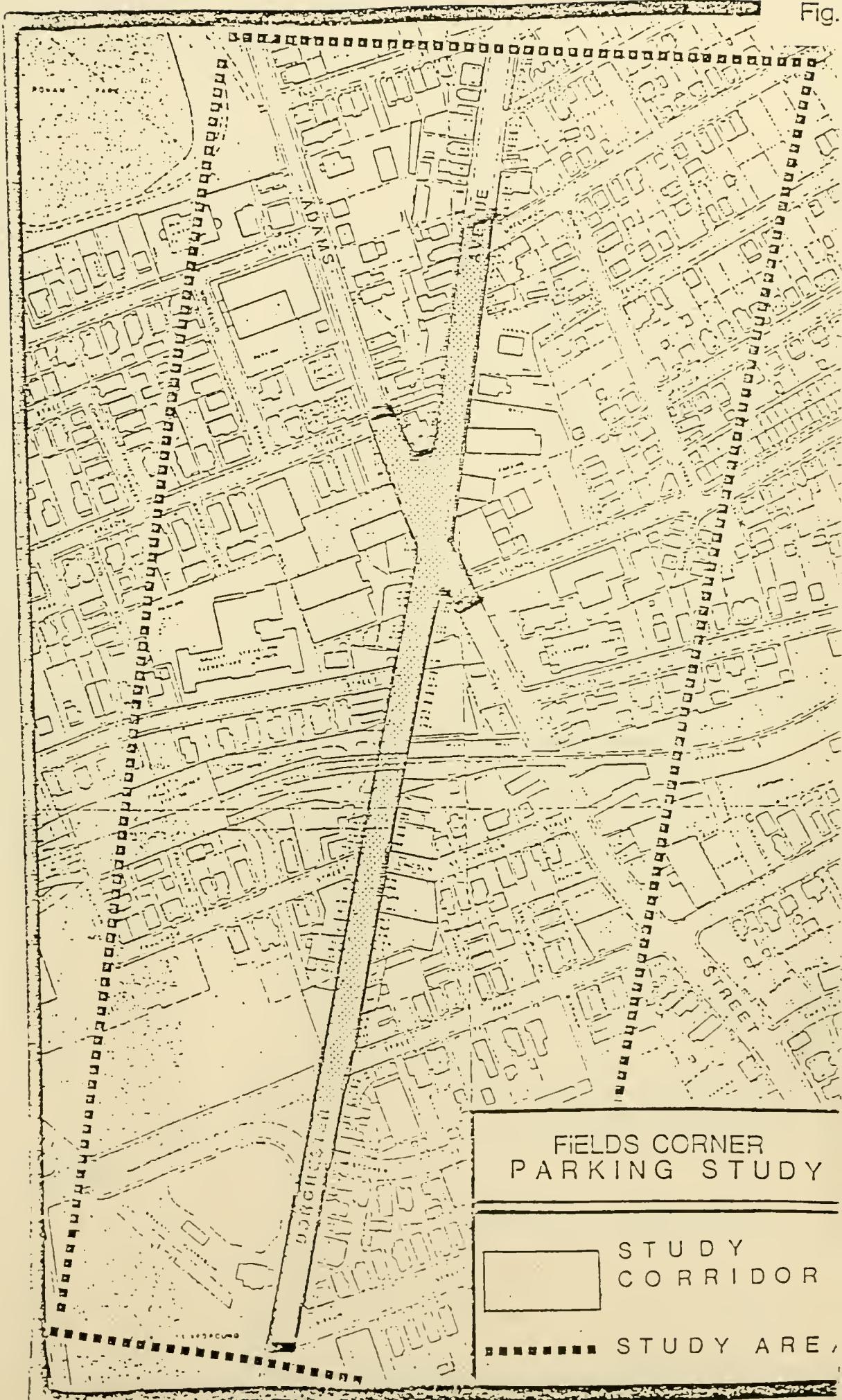
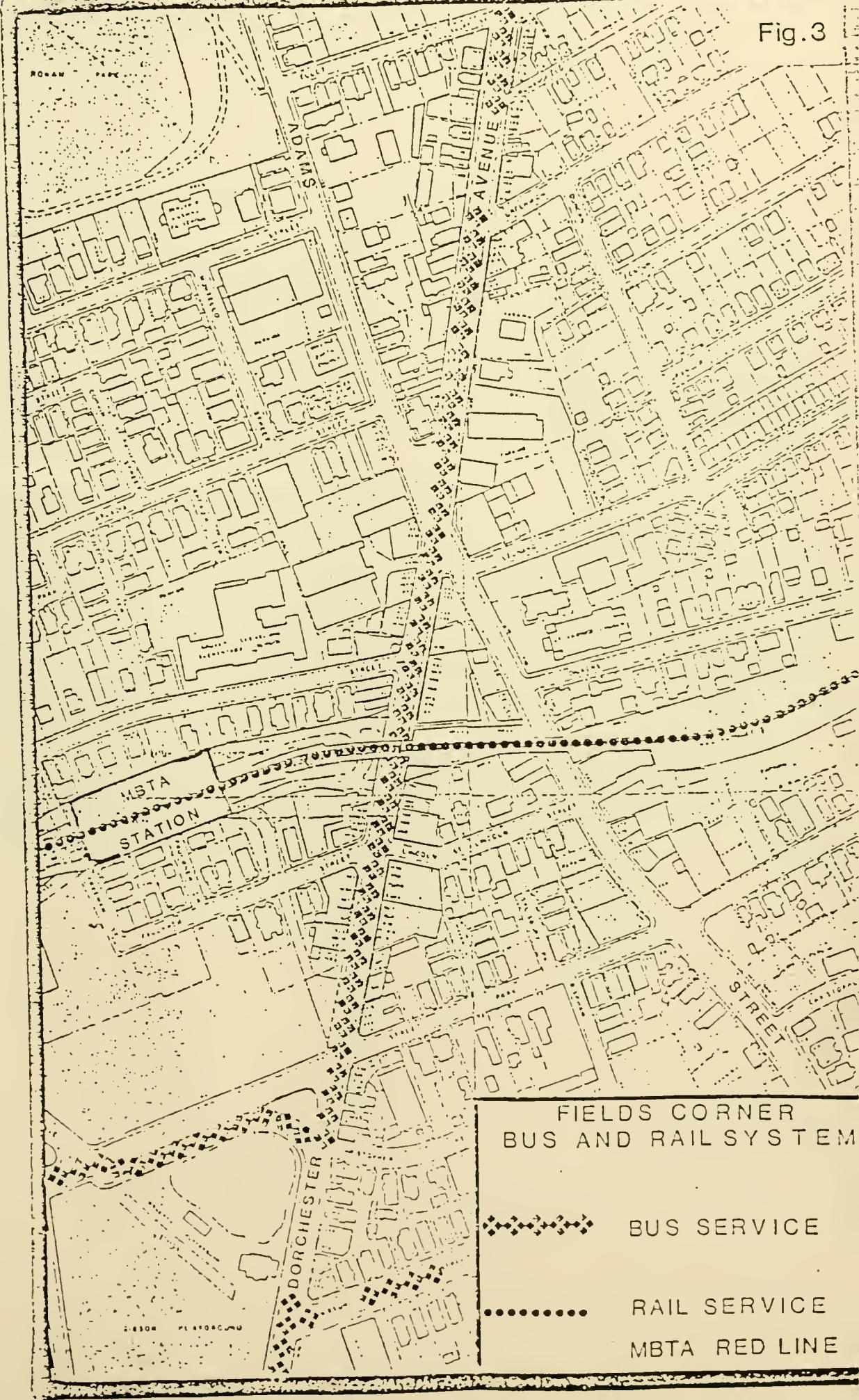




Fig. 3





### I. 3 Existing Conditions - Transportation System

As the transportation system around Fields Corner changed in composition and society-at-large became more auto dependent, congestion problems began to develop. Demand for transportation service, particularly from auto and truck services, has increased with time while roadway capacity has remained relatively unchanged. Complaints about traffic congestion and lack of parking have become common. At the core of these problems is the variety and mix of land uses which has given Fields Corner its vibrancy and has produced the demand that has outstripped supply.

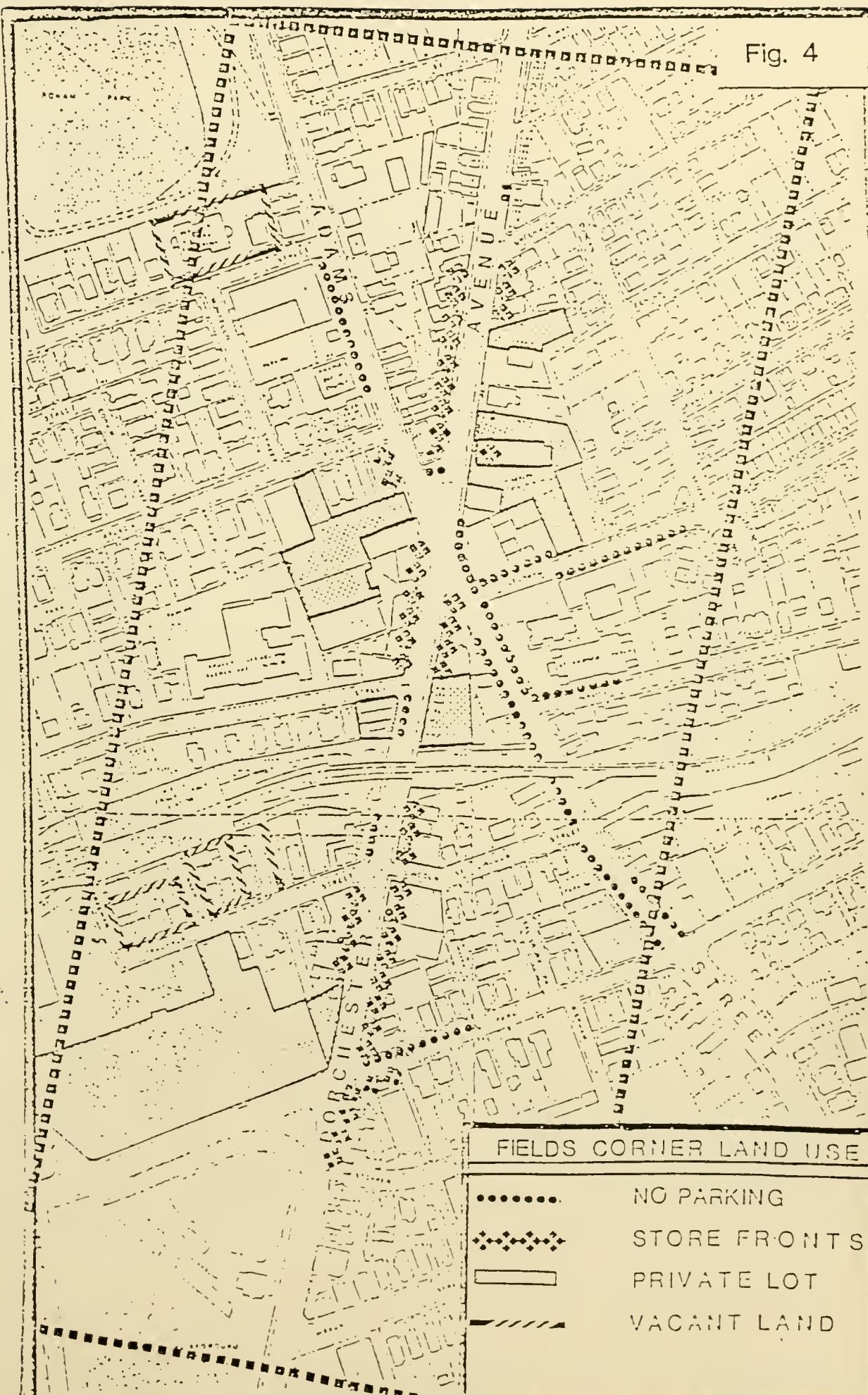
### I. 4 Existing Conditions - Land Use

Within the Study Area are a number of land uses (Figure 4), occupying buildings of one to four stories in height. The frontage on Dorchester Ave. and Adams Street is primarily commercial but the remainder of the corridor, within the study area, is primarily residential. The southern section of Dorchester Ave., from Park Street to Adams Street, is comprised of banks, small restaurants, bar-rooms, hardware stores, dry goods stores, and service centers. To the north, residential uses mix with small businesses.

In the remainder of the Study Area, triple-decker homes are commonplace, although several apartment complexes are present. Several churches, a school, small shopping center, and MBTA station are also located within the boundaries of the Study Area.



Fig. 4





## II. Parking Turnover Study

In order to analyze on-street parking demand, a parking turnover study was conducted. This section describes how a parking turnover study is conducted, outlines the methodology that was used to collect data, summarizes and analyzes the data base and draws conclusions about the nature of the on-street parking problems in Fields Corner.

### II. 1 Synopsis

A parking turnover study is used to determine the number of times that a parking space is occupied by a vehicle. This is not to imply that each space is looked at individually, but rather, aggregate rates for the entire study area or different subdivisions of the study area (e.g., legal vs. illegal, long-term versus short-term) are produced.

Two basic elements are essential to determine parking turnover rates: the number of parking stalls and the number of vehicles which occupy these stalls during the course of the study period. The parking stalls are marked out before the study and are static elements; the vehicles are inventoried through field observation. Parking turnover rates are calculated by dividing the total number of vehicles by the total number of spaces. A turnover rate of one is the minimum value for parking turnover, indicating that each space has been occupied for the full study period; higher rates indicate greater usage of the spaces.

### II. 2 Methodology

Parking stalls were marked along the initial Study Corridor. Each stall was approximately 20 feet in length. This resulted in 198 total curbside spaces with an accompanying 198 double parking spaces. Of the 198 curbside spaces, 123 were legal spaces and 75 were illegal spaces (i.e., posted no parking, driveways, fire hydrants, handicapped spaces, crosswalks, taxi zones and bus stops).

The Study Corridor was divided into three sections, and a field observer was assigned to each section. Every half hour over the 11 hour (7 AM - 6 PM) study period each field observer walked an assigned route, recording the licence plate and classification (i.e., commercial vs. non-commercial) of any vehicles that were parked in the pre determined parking stalls. In approximate terms, then, it was possible to determine the total number of vehicles using the stalls and their length of stay.



## II. 3 Analysis

Table 1 presents a break-down of curbside parking supply and demand. Three general categories were used to describe curbside use as noted in this table, with refinements of specific items presented in Tables 2 through 4. Double parking is treated separately in Table 5 since it represents excess demand specific to particular locations and as such is an effect, rather than a cause, of the parking conditions in Fields.

### II. 3.1 Curbside Turnover Rates - General

Using the formula that was described in Section II.1 and the data presented in Table 1, it is possible to calculate turnover rates for various general curbside parking demand. The two most significant findings are:

- \* The turnover rate for all parkers at all parking stalls (legal & illegal) is 4.3
- \* The turnover rate of all vehicles which park less than six hours is 5.6

The relationship between these two findings is important, emphasizing the impact that long-term curbside parking has on Fields Corner. The 56 long-term parking movements represent less than 7% of the total number of parking movements. If these 56 parking slots were available to vehicles which park less than six hours, over 300 additional parking movements could be satisfied, assuming a turnover rate of 5.6.

Equally important is the fact that, under these assumptions over 250 of the additional parking movements would be legal, indicating that the demand by the vast majority of illegal parkers could be satisfied with existing curbspace.

### II. 3.2 Curbside Turnover Rates - Legal & Illegal

Three categories of curbside parking movements are delineated in Table 1: 1) Legal-Unrestricted, 2) Legal-Restricted, 3) Illegal. Each parking slot in the Study Area was assigned to a group according to its primary use during the course of the day. For this reason, curbside spaces with AM and PM peak hour restrictions were assigned to the Legal-Unrestricted category, noting that turnover counts are not significantly affected by this decision.



Analysis of the turnover rates associated with the three categories revealed the following:

1. Legal Unrestricted

- \* Overall turnover rate of 4.3
- \* Removal of long-term parking movements increases the turnover rate to 6.7

2. Legal-Restricted

- \* Overall turnover rate of 7.7
- \* Only short-term parking movement were found at these spaces

3. Illegal

- \* Overall turnover rate of 3.5
- \* Removal of long-term parking movements increase the turnover rate to 3.8
- \* Removal of the driveway and crosswalk classifications (Table 2) produces an overall rate of 4.6
- \* Removal of the driveway and crosswalk classifications, as well as long-term parking movements, produces a turnover rate of 5.9.

Driveway and crosswalk violation were few, in number and short in duration (Table 2) skewing the turnover rates for the overall and illegal category of turning movements. The impact of this unused curbside capacity, albeit illegal, is most apparent when these spaces and their associated movements are removed from the Illegal parking category, thereby increasing the turnover rates to levels that are comparable to the Legal category. This is problematic, inferring that parking trends are consistent throughout the Fields Corner area irregardless of the posting of parking prohibitions. Enforcement of parking restrictions was not evident and certainly impacted this process.

Illegal parking movements also occurred at restricted legal parking spaces. Table 3 illustrates the breakdown of legal and illegal movements at handicapped and taxi stand locations. By far, the greatest number of movements in the handicapped slots are by vehicles without HP plates (97% of all movements). Conversely, taxi stands have a much lower percentage of violation (17% of all movements), reflecting the high level of activity of the intended use of these spaces. The high turnover rate for the Legal-Restricted category reflects the amount of taxi cab activity.



### II. 3.3 Commercial Curbside Parking

As was noted in Section II. 3, there are a variety of businesses located in the Fields Corner Study Area. Table 4 presents a break-down of the observed commercial curbside parking movements. Since there are no loading zones in the Study Area, the categories are the same as those presented in Table 1.

All the commercial curbside parking movements are short-term, as would be expected. There is an even split between legal and illegal movements, with all illegal movements occurring in posted No Parking Zones. In addition, Table 5 shows that an additional 4 commercial vehicles double parked in order to make deliveries.

The lack of loading zones puts commercial vehicles and non-commercial vehicles in competition with each other for legal curbside spaces. This puts commercial vehicles, particularly those which arrive during the late morning and afternoon, at a disadvantage. Drivers of commercial vehicles clearly have a strong desire to park their vehicles as near as possible to the stores, so as to facilitate the loading/unloading process by minimizing the length of delivery/pick-ups. This further reduces the possibility that the commercial vehicle will find a legal curbside space.

### II. 3.4 Double Parking

The majority of double parking took place between Park St. and Charles St. (82%). Here, 68% of the legal curbside spaces were used for long-term parking. Table 5 illustrates that most double parkers were non-commercial vehicles (82%); all but 2 vehicles parked for less than 2 hours and in fact were typically double parked for one-half hour. Double parking in Fields Corner seems to be treated as a fact-of-life. Individuals who were observed double parking rarely engaged in a search for legal parking. Most people seemed to be running quick errands and, therefore, probably saw their individual impact on the roadway as being minimal.



Table 4 Commercial Curbside Parking

	<u>2hr. or Less</u>	<u>2-6 hours</u>	<u>6 hrs or More</u>	<u>Total Demand</u>
Legal - Unrestricted	27	0	0	27
Legal - Restricted	0	0	0	0
Illegal	26	0	0	26
Total	53	0	0	53

Table 5 Commercial vs Non-Commercial: Double Parking

	<u>2hr. or Less</u>	<u>2-6 hours</u>	<u>6 hrs or More</u>	<u>Total Demand</u>
Commercial	4	0	0	4
Non-Commercial	16	2	0	18
Total	20	2	0	22

Table 6 Violations of Peak Hour Restrictions

<u>Time</u>	<u>Parking Supply</u>	<u>Movements</u>
7:30 - 9:00 AM	5	7
4:00 - 6:00 PM	8	10

(N.B. Movements for 1 hr. or Less)



## II. 4 Conclusion

This section has documented the results of an excess demand for on-street parking in the Fields Corner area. The resultant shortfall, has manifested itself in the following ways:

- \* A shortfall of 56 long-term parking spaces, which if satisfied at an off-street location, would provide curb space for over 300 short-term parking movements throughout the day
- \* Parking turnover rates that are comparable for the legal parking supply
- \* Parking movements by commercial vehicles that are half legal and half illegal.
- \* A concentration of double parking on Dorchester Ave. between Park Street and Charles Street.

At the core of the on-street parking shortfall is the extent and location of long-term parkers coupled with a strong demand for short-term parking. Transit users seem to account for the majority of long-term parkers within one block of the station; further away from the station merchants and their employees comprise almost all of the long-term parkers, with the possible exception of some residents.

While only a small percent of the total number of parking movements, vehicles which are parked for greater than six hours reduce the efficiency of the curbside parking supply in Fields Corner. As a result, parking for patrons of the many small businesses in the area is severely limited, making double parking commonplace. This inhibits economic activity and limits the potential for future expansion. Further understanding of the parking conditions in Fields Corner necessitate an understanding of the off-street parking supply.



### III. Off Street Parking

Off-street parking is the second category of parking that was examined in this study. This section describes the nature of the existing stock, assesses present conditions and draws conclusions about the ability of existing off-street parking to ease the problems that are associated with the excess demand for on-street parking.

#### III. 1 Existing Supply

Figure 5 shows the location of the off-street parking lots that were identified in the Fields Corner Study Area. All of the lots were privately owned and operated.

The largest lot (Lot A) is located in the Bradlees shopping mall on Park Street in the southwestern corner of the Study Area. It has a capacity of approximately 350 vehicles and has a restricted use for customers of the mall. Next to this lot is Lot B with a maximum capacity of 10 vehicles, and access from Faulkner Street.

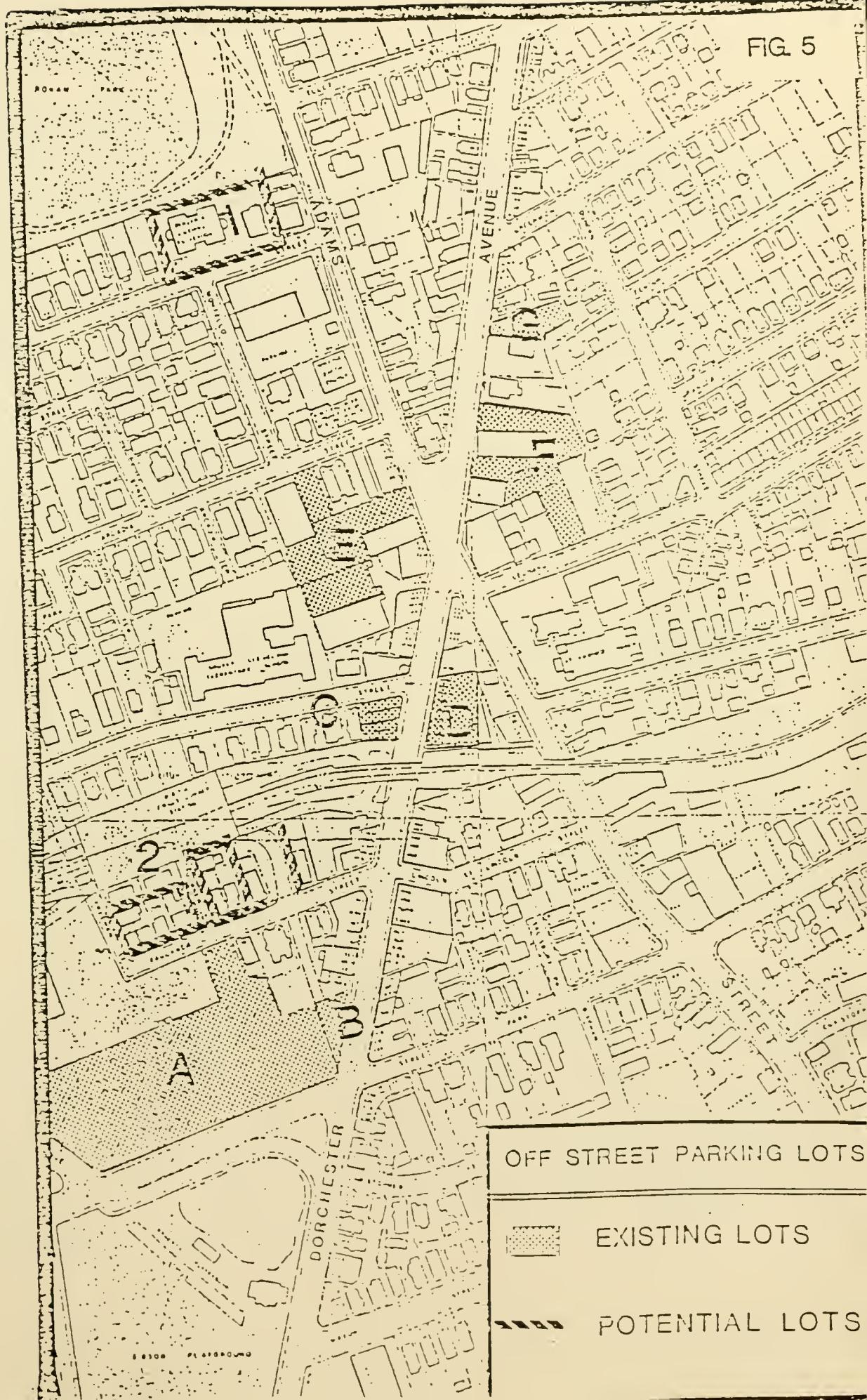
Further north, on Dorchester Avenue, are two smaller lots. Lot C is located at the corner of Charles Street and Dorchester Avenue, it has a capacity of 10 vehicles and is used by employees and patrons of Gallagher Insurance. Opposite Charles Street on the east side of Dorchester Avenue, Lot D is owned and operated by Mickey's Place. It is opened to the general public with rates of \$3 per day or \$1 per hour, having a maximum capacity of 32 vehicles.

Two large though disjointed lots are located near the intersection of Dorchester Avenue and Adams Street. Lot E is actually two levels with separate entrances and has a maximum overall capacity of 92 vehicles and Lot F has a maximum capacity of approximately 53 vehicles. There are several present uses for each lot: Lot E serves an apartment complex, a bank, and the Grover Cleveland School; Lot F serves the two banks, Lappen Auto, and the Post Office and has a 1 hour parking limit.

Finally, Lot G is the northern-most off-street parking facility within the Study Area. It has a capacity of 11 vehicles. This lot is adjacent to a Store 24 and is used by customers of the store.



FIG. 5





### III. 2 Existing Demand

Several of the lots are operating at capacity for the better part of the day. Lot C, Lot E (excluding the lot servicing the apartment complex) and Lot F did not seem to have any excess capacity. Long-term parkers comprised the largest market segment at these locations.

Lot B had some excess capacity with the majority of users being long-term parkers. Lot A also has some excess capacity. Typically between 25% and 50% of the spaces in this lot were unused. The remainder of the lot was used mostly by customers of the shopping mall, with a smaller percentage of employee vehicles parked in the remaining spaces.

In Lot G, excess capacity was also found to be evident during the study period; this lot experienced the lowest percent of occupied spaces during the day for lots that did not charge a fee. Only one lot, Lot D, charged a fee for parking; and, this lot had the lowest overall percent of usage.

### III. 3 Conclusion

In the previous section, a shortfall of curbside parking was illustrated. This section has documented the following findings concerning off-street parking supply & demand:

- \* There is a need to provide all day parking for merchants and their employees.
- \* There are no municipal off-street parking facilities in Fields Corner
- \* Only one lot, with maximum capacity of 32 vehicles, is available to the general public
- \* Several existing private lots are full throughout the day, although a significant amount of excess capacity does
- \* in the present off-street parking supply, in particular the Bradlees shopping mall lot (Lot A) has a number of empty spaces throughout the day.

Availability of off-street parking in Fields Corner is limited. With a parking shortfall of 56 long-term spaces, only one off-street location (Lot D) is available to the general public. By itself, Lot D could not satisfy the parking shortfall, even though some excess capacity does exist in this lot. The large Bradlees shopping mall lot, where demand is well below supply, would offer a possible source of additional parking, except that it is reserved for customers parking only. The existing off-street parking conditions, therefore, present limited options for satisfying the present parking shortfall in Fields Corner and retaining flexibility for accommodating future demands.



#### IV Alternative Analysis

Present conditions in Fields Corner require actions by the City of Boston to accommodate existing and future parking demands. Toward this end, the following options are evaluated in this section:

1. Enforcement - Minimum Required Action (MRA)
2. Improvements to the Curbside Operations
3. Improvements to Existing Off-Street Parking Supply
4. Expansion of Off-Street Parking Supply

##### IV. 1 Enforcement - Minimum Required Action (MRA)

Increased enforcement of parking regulations is necessitated by the existing conditions in Fields Corner. This approach should address double parking and parking at curbside locations with parking prohibitions. Two locations are particularly problematic for either or both types of violations and, as such, would be good target areas:

1. Dorchester Ave. between Park Street and Charles Street
2. The intersection of Dorchester Ave. and Adams Street at the Veterans Memorial.

The first location is a source of both double parking and curbside parking violations. The location of the transit station, numerous stores, and bar-rooms directly impact this activity; violators are both commercial and non-commercial vehicles. Violations at the second location are almost exclusively curbside violations since street widths prohibit double parking in this area. Activity at the Bank of Boston, Workingman's Coop, and the Post Office account for most of the non-commercial violations; while the dominant source of violations by commercial vehicles is attributable to the Adams Appliance Company. Traffic flows are most dramatically impacted on Adams Street, west of Dorchester Avenue, and the turn area on the northside of the Veterans Memorial.



Increasing enforcement of existing regulations would have to be extensive and continuous to eliminate violations at all or key locations in the Fields Corner area. The benefits of improved circulation through elimination of double parking have to be weighed against a number of potential negative ramifications. Such a program may discourage people from shopping in Fields Corner or encourage illegal parking at restricted use lots. Also, this option by itself does not address a number of important issues, such as loading zones and the needs that commercial establishments have for delivery access.

In fact, with increased enforcement and no other actions, commercial vehicles will face tougher competition for legal curbside spaces. All things considered, therefore, increases enforcement of parking violations is a complementary action and would be most effective and equitable if it were applied in conjunction with other alternatives.

#### IV. 2 Improvements to Curbside Operations

Restructuring the locations of the present curbside restrictions offers a way to meet the demands of commercial and non-commercial vehicles. The following elements need to be considered:

- \* Curbside parking, and
- \* Loading zones

The need for short-term parking, which has manifested itself in a number of illegal parking movements, can be addressed by restricting existing curbside slots as designated short-term parking spaces. Either signage or meters can achieve this goal; both options require additional parking enforcement personnel.

Redefining other locations, which now have restrictions, offers the only means to increase the curbside parking supply. An addition of approximately 12 - 15 spaces may be possible, mostly on the eastside of Dorchester Ave. opposite the transit station; MBTA bus operation would have to be considered in this context, since the parking prohibition was intended to facilitate bus turning movements. Also, reconsideration of restrictions along Leonard Street and Adams Street near Leonard Street would relieve the pressure for illegal parking in front of the Post Office by providing an additional 5-6 spaces.



#### IV. 2 Improvement to Curbside Operations (cont.)

While addressing the appropriateness of present curbside regulation offers a means of improving operations, it will not satisfy the existing parking demand. Only a few new spaces can be brought on-line by restructuring the present curbside supply; a portion of these spaces will be lost by establishing loading zones. Also, the needs of long-term parkers will not be satisfied under the suggestions raised in this section and, future economic expansion could not be adequately satisfied through improvements to the curbside parking supply. As such, the present and future parking needs of Fields Corner businesses will require a solution that includes improvements or addtions to the off-street parking supply.

#### IV. 3 Improvements to Existing Off-Street Parking Supply

Long-term parking needs of merchants and their employees are best satisfied at off-street lots. Since the present availability of general public off-street parking is limited, negotiations with owners of private lots offer the only means of expanding the existing supply without constructing a new facility. The Bradlees shopping mall lot offers the best opportunity for this approach since it has significant excess capacity.

#### IV. 4 Expansion of Off-Street Parking Supply

Another alternative to satisfy the long-term parking demand is the construction of an off-street municipally operated parking facility. Two options are possible under this scheme:

- 1. New surface lots, and
- 2. New structural lots.

The location for new lots in Fields Corner are somewhat limited. Figure 5 illustrates two potential sites. Lot 1 is located at the site of the former Benjamin Cushing School on Robinson Street in the northwest corner of the Study Area. It has a potential capacity of 75 vehicles and could make use of existing curb cuts. The disadvantages to this site are its remoteness and its location in a residential neighborhood. Lot 2 is located on Faulkner Street next to the transit station and has a potential capacity of 50 vehicles. While this site has good access and it is relatively close to the area of highest demand, this area is generally perceived as being unsafe;



security measures would be necessary to ensure continued and safe usage.

Structural lots could be constructed at either potential surface lot location (Lot 1 or Lot 2). At Lot 1, a structural garage would be very intrusive to the residential nature of Robinson Street; at the Lot 2 location, this would be less of an issue, although consideration would have to be given to the three residences that now abutt the site. There is one last location, above the southern section of Lot E that also could be used for development of a parking garage; this section is owned by the School Department and used as a parking lot for the Grover Cleveland School. One to two decks could add 50 - 100 additional parking spaces. The location is central to Fields Corner with existing driveway and grades that would lessen construction expenses; easements for access via the Mutual Savings Bank lot would have to be obtained to implement this proposal.

#### IV. 5 Conclusion

The extent and complexity of existing parking problems in Fields Corner necessitates a broad-based approach that includes the following elements:

1. Increased enforcement of parking regulations
2. Implementation of a comprehensive loading zone program
3. Expansion of existing on-street capacity
4. Increased off-street parking supply

The need for the first item is self-evident. Loading zones need to be established to insure curbside access for businesses and, thereby, reduce the amount of illegal parking movements that are made by commercial vehicles. Re-evaluation of existing regulations to allow for more curbside spaces will be largely balanced by the losses to the delineation of curbside loading zone. The additional spaces that would become available would not be enough to handle the present parking short-fall even if the existing general public off-street parking supply were fully utilized.

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It is apparent therefore that additional off-street parking is necessary. Accordingly, short-term users should be restricted to the street and long-term users should be accommodated off-street. Since the demands of future economic expansion in Fields Corner and daily fluctuation in demand need to be addressed, plans to increase present supply via negotiations with private lot owners or construction of a new lot should provide for 65-75 vehicles.

#### V. Recommendations

A comprehensive plan, with short-term and long-term goals, needs to be developed and implemented; target dates and a monitoring process, with follow-up studies, have to be developed. The following key elements need to be included.

1. Short-term
  - a. Increase enforcement of parking violations
  - b. Reevaluate present curbside regulations
    - \* establish loading zones
    - \* establish short-term parking zones.
2. Long-term
  - a. Increase off-street parking supply
    - \* negotiate space at existing lots
    - \* construct parking lots

#### V. 1 Short Term Actions

Short term recommendations can be implemented in the near future and should be timed to coincide with each other. Some legal unregulated curbside space should remain for long-term parkers particularly residents on Dorchester Ave. near Greenwich Street; the majority of legal slots, however, should be designated for short-term parking use (i.e., 2 hrs, or less). The City should have strict control over loading zones to ensure that they do not become long-term parking spaces. A mix of time-restricted and all day loading zones may be appropriate. Finally, enforcement should be steadily increased over the implementation period of the short-term recommendations, culminating in a regular program that is in effect when the off-street parking lot comes on-line.

#### V. 2 Long Term Actions

A two pronged approach will insure that additional general public off-street parking capacity is brought on-line in a timely fashion. Negotiation with the owners of the Bradlees shopping mall lot should proceed immediately. If this option appears to be fruitless, the necessary measures should be taken to construct a new 65-75 vehicle facility. Under either option, special provisions (e.g., reduced monthly rates for paid parkers) should be made for merchants and their employees. Signage should clearly delineate the location of the lot.

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